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FOR G/TIP, G, INL, DRL, PRM, IWI, WHA/PPC, WHA/AND

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SUBJECT: ECUADOR 2007 TIP REPORT

REF: SECSTATE 202745

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Over the past year, Ecuador has achieved significant and sustained progress in the areas of prevention, protection, and prosecution of TIP. GOE commitment to combat TIP is evidenced by former President Palacio's signing of the National Anti-TIP Plan on August 30, 2006. The GOE has implemented comprehensive anti-TIP legislation and continues to vigorously investigate and prosecute offenders. More than 100 police, prosecutors and judges underwent intensive training to combat TIP, resulting in more than 100 TIP cases currently in process; there were two TIP convictions and sentencings in September and December 2006. Specially appointed prosecutors are leading prosecution efforts. The Attorney General's Office tracks data on TIP complaints, arrests and prosecutions.

¶2. (SBU) The GOE, via INNFA, launched in November 2006 a US \$1 million national anti-TIP and anti-alien smuggling campaign targeting vulnerable audiences in all 22 provinces. In August 2006, the Ecuadorian Public Ministry established a 36-member police unit for Victim and Witness Protection. GOE-supported shelters for TIP victims protected 27 TIP victims in 2006. Senior government officials, including the former President, First Lady, and cabinet members spoke out publicly many times about the problem. President Rafael Correa took office took office January 15 and already several senior ministers of government have expressed GOE commitment to continue the fight against trafficking in persons. End Summary.

¶3. (U) This report provides responses keyed to the TIP questionnaire contained in RefTel. Nominations of heroes and best practices follow at Para 8. Point of contact is Erik Martini, IVG 644 ext. 4424, fax: +593-2-254-0712. Hours spent on this report: USAID officer 30, NAS Officer 5, POLOFF 20, POLCHIEF 5.

¶4. (SBU) Overview of Activities to Eliminate TIP:

¶A. Is the country a country of origin, transit, or destination for internationally trafficked men, women, or children? Provide, where possible, numbers or estimates for each group; how they were trafficked, to where, and for what purpose. Does

the trafficking occur within the country's borders? Does it occur in territory outside of the government's control (e.g. in a civil war situation)? Are any estimates or reliable numbers available as to the extent or magnitude of the problem? What is (are) the source(s) of available information on trafficking in persons or what plans are in place (if any) to undertake documentation of trafficking? How reliable are the numbers and these sources? Are certain groups of persons more at risk of being trafficked (e.g. women and children, boys versus girls, certain ethnic groups, refugees, etc.)?

Ecuador is a country of origin, transit, and destination for trafficked women and children. The most comprehensive TIP study of Ecuador was undertaken by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2003. This report by a respected international organization remains the benchmark of research into the trafficking problem and is widely regarded as accurate. The research showed that approximately 5,200 youth and adolescents -- between age 15 and 17 -- are commercially sexually exploited in Ecuador. Studies also show Ecuadorian youth sent to Spain, Italy, Venezuela, Peru and Colombia for labor or commercial sexual exploitation.

More recent TIP research was completed by the ILO in May 2006, studying 9 selected cities throughout Ecuador: Ambato, Otavalo, Riobamba, Quito, Santo Domingo de los Colorados, Guayaquil, Manta, Machala and Lago Agrio. The study confirmed extensive routes of internal trafficking between these cities and found evidence that Ecuadorians were trafficked out of Ecuador to Colombia and Venezuela and Colombians were trafficked into Ecuador.

In addition to the baseline studies that were conducted in Santo Domingo de los Colorados and Ibarra, Foundation Esquel, together with Foundation Esperanza (Hope) and the Municipal Childhood and Adolescent Advisory Board of Tena, will conduct a baseline study of the situation of commercial sexual exploitation of minors and adolescents in Tena, province of Napo. The objectives of the study will be to raise awareness of public sector officials and civil society organizations through training; to formulate a Local Action Plan to combat CSEM; and to promote a local public policy and training to increase the presentation of complaints and accusations of CSEM crimes.

1B. Please provide a general overview of the trafficking situation in the country and any changes since the last TIP Report (e.g. changes in direction). Also briefly explain the political will to address trafficking in persons. Other items to address may include: What kind of conditions are the victims trafficked into? Which populations are targeted by the traffickers? Who are the traffickers? What methods are used to approach victims? (Are they offered lucrative jobs, sold by their families, approached by friends of friends, etc.?) What methods are used to move the victims (e.g., are false documents being used?).

The human trafficking pattern in Ecuador does not appear to have changed significantly since the 2006 TIP Report. The GOE continues to show its resolve to take action against trafficking.

There is a high incidence of internally trafficked children and adolescents who are sold into sexual slavery. Conditions that victims are trafficked into are illustrated in a January 2006 DINAPEN raid that led to the rescue of 11 minors between the ages 14-17. According to the GOE TIP prosecutor, Thania Moreno, the accused controlled the girls, moving them from city to city within Ecuador and forced them into prostitution. One victim stated that "once Qhired" and regardless of age, the club converted into a prison. The girls could not leave: there they slept and ate." False documents were obtained in Quito and Guayaquil. Out of the 11 victims, three were from Santo Domingo, Pichincha province, two from Buena Fe, Los Rios province, one from Quevedo, Los Rios province, one from Guayaquil, Guayas province, one from Chone, Manabi province, and the three remaining from various cities in the Amazon region.

On September 9, press reported the following testimony from a

victim: "I was recruited by my boyfriend," Valeria (fictitious name), a 14-year-old, noted. A friend of my brother courted me and brought me to Crucita (Manabi province) with the promise that I would have a better life in the capital. Little by little he began to hit me and forced me to work in a brothel. I also had to give him money--\$25 for each act. After an operation by DINAPEN, he is now in prison and I almost can't sleep at night for the fear of seeing him again."

The TIP study completed by the ILO in May 2006 and a 2006 study by Our Youth Foundation, also provide insight into trafficking targets, traffickers, and methods used to approach victims.

Traffickers tend to recruit targets in extremely poor communities. They target vulnerable adolescents, enticing them with promises of work, wealth and success. TIP victims at a Quito shelter tell of being approached by friends at bars who offered them jobs and opportunity. Poor parents also sell their adolescent children to traffickers who tout the chance of legitimate employment and adventure abroad.

The most vulnerable trafficking targets include institutionalized and abandoned children of emigrants, children of prostitutes, and young migrants. Areas with high rates of human trafficking in Ecuador include border communities, villages near tourist areas and major corporations, the highlands, and urban coastal communities. In Santo Domingo, Pichincha province, there is a high incidence of internally trafficked children and adolescents who are exploited for sexual slavery. These victims arrive in Santo Domingo from various parts of Ecuador in transit or as a final destination. Traffickers post job announcements along the lampposts of Santo Domingo's streets "seeking young attractive women for better paid jobs." Machala and Guayaquil are referred to as recruitment centers, places of origin for a number of victims trafficked internally and internationally. In the highlands there are reports of minors from indigenous villages, located in and around Otavalo, trafficked to other Latin American and European countries (e.g., Spain, Italy).

In Riobamba children are lured into labor exploitation at agricultural or animal fairs, attended by primarily poor indigenous families. Traffickers offer parents better living conditions (work, food, education, travel, etc.) in exchange for monthly or yearly payments (US \$800 to \$1000 annually). Traffickers typically provide an initial up front cash amount to parents in exchange for consent to leave with the child. Interviews with parents also suggest that traffickers have approached the child directly, luring them with offers of money, without consent of the parents.

In Quito, ads placed on lampposts and in bus terminals often seek girls, offering work, housing, food and commission Q cases which lead to sexual enslavement of minors. Recruiters also may be girls convincing potential Qworkers' by offering an easy way to earn money to get a cellular phone, new clothing, etc. These recruiters often earn a commission for bringing in other girls who eventually end up working in brothels. Organized crime groups also operate and traffic girls between Quito and Santo Domingo de los Colorados.

In Lago Agrio a young girl from Cali, Colombia was forced into prostitution after a neighbor asked permission to take the child to the beach. The girl was taken instead to a brother where she was held in sexual slavery.

In a documentary, the NGO Our Youth Foundation highlighted methods to lure victims. A typical ruse deals with a boyfriend, who falls in love with a young girl promising her a better life and lucrative job if they move away to another city. In the city, the money soon runs out and the boyfriend tells the girl that she must work so they can make ends meet. He often indicates that he has located a job for her Q and presents a uniform from a cabaret or night club. Reluctantly, she accepts, thinking that it will only be for a short while until they find something better and get back on their feet. After a couple of nights, she is forced